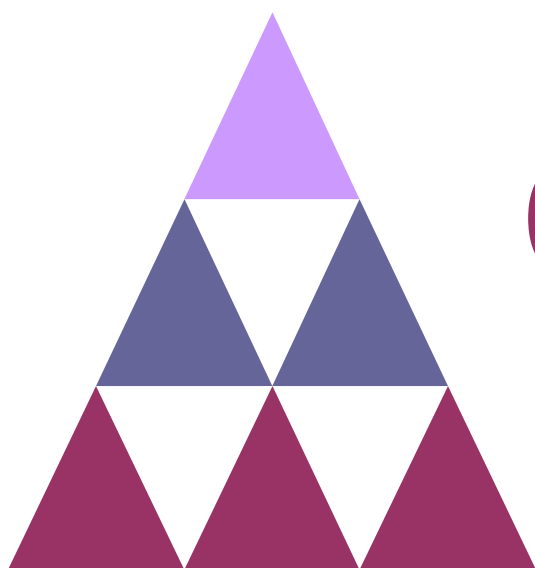


2006



Growing Futures

**North Dakota Early Childhood
Professional Development**



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Growing Futures

North Dakota Early Childhood Professional Development

Introduction

What is early childhood professional development? Who is it for? Why is it important for North Dakota? How should it be addressed? For more than a decade, these questions have generated continuing discussion among the state's early childhood practitioners, early childhood professional associations, and early childhood training and education institutions. This document, the product of the North Dakota Early Childhood Professional Development Project, addresses these questions and describes the training and education model proposed by the project to provide quality professional development for the state's early childhood workforce.

An early childhood professional development system directly benefits North Dakota's early childhood care providers; their needs and interests are an important consideration

North Dakota is discovering sound economic reasons for investing in the early childhood workforce.

in the development and implementation of the system. The interests of the early childhood field as a whole are also important; North Dakota needs a well trained early childhood workforce that demonstrates the skills and knowledge required to meet the standards of our industry. In addition, an early childhood professional development system contributes to the quality of life and economic well-being of

our state. According to the North Dakota KIDS COUNT! research brief, "*Economic Impact of Child Care in North Dakota*" (Fassinger, Jenson, and Rathge, 2004), the child care industry supports the state's economy by helping thousands of parents join the labor force, creating employment for more than 6000 child care workers, generating annual revenues of more than \$123 million dollars, contributing to the state's economy through the purchase of goods and services, and providing an important resource for employee recruitment and the reduction of turnover and absenteeism. However, the most crucial consideration of an early childhood professional development system must be the needs of our state's children. As the vision and goals for early childhood professional development are implemented in North Dakota, the question must always be asked, "How will this positively impact our children?"

In North Dakota today, it is more common for a young child, birth through five years of age, to spend most of the day with a care provider than with a parent. 76% of North Dakota mothers (ND KIDS COUNT! 2005) with children under age six are in the workforce, a percentage higher than the national average. Many care providers are family members or friends but an increasing number of children spend their days in formal care settings, such as licensed family-based or center-based programs, or in informal unlicensed care settings.

Research indicates that the early care a child receives has a significant influence on the child's development and impacts the child's ability to learn. The early learning years,

birth through age eight, are critical for brain development. Recent research has proven that a child's brain develops in response to environmental stimuli, highlighting the importance of early experiences to a child's future success and ability to learn. Among the extensive research findings are the following:

...a child's brain develops in response to environmental stimuli, highlighting the importance of early experiences to a child's ability to learn.

- High-quality infant care is associated with positive outcomes for children in cognitive and language development. Overall, children who are in high quality care and education settings show increased cognitive and language development. (Barnett, 1995; Brooks-Gunn et al, 1994; Burchinal et al, 1996, Burchinal et al, 1997; Feagans et al, 1995; Lamb, 1998; Ramey and Ramey, 1998)
- Children's social and emotional development is correlated with quality child care settings. (Lamb, 1998; NICHD ECCRN, 1996; Scarr and Eisenberg, 1993)
- Children who have stable and secure relationships with caregivers show more competent interactions with adults and more advanced peer play, higher vocabulary levels, and more active engagement with materials, both in the preschool years and on into the school years. (Andersson, 1989; Howes et al, 1992; Peisner-Feinberg et al, 2000)

A well trained early childhood workforce supports the state's economic wellbeing and contributes to the future success of our state's children.

The kinds of environments that promote desirable outcomes for children rarely happen by accident. Instead, they are the result of well-developed knowledge and skill on the part of care providers. Studies show that the education and training of the care provider is the number one indicator of quality in all child care settings. The more preparation care providers have, the better able they are to establish the quality of care that leads to

positive child outcomes. The skills and knowledge of our state's early childhood workforce contribute significantly to our children's ability to become enthusiastic life-long learners who are able to succeed personally and professionally throughout their lives. In short, well-trained care providers are better equipped to support young children with the environments, experiences, and interactions they need to thrive and achieve.

North Dakota's Commitment to Early Care and Education

North Dakota has demonstrated a commitment to quality early care and education by implementing numerous initiatives that support a trained early childhood workforce. Throughout the past decade, North Dakota has:

- Increased the certification requirements for early childhood educators in public schools
- Increased the number of articulation agreements among state and tribal higher education institutions
- Increased the availability of college level on-line coursework

- Implemented standardized infant toddler coursework in state and tribal colleges
- Delivered standardized community-based infant toddler training for practitioners caring for the youngest children
- Recruited, trained, and supported infant toddler trainers statewide
- Increased annual training requirements for licensed child care providers
- Implemented a basic child care training required for newly licensed family child care providers
- Developed and delivered statewide training specific to child care center directors
- Initiated a Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Project for child care center staff
- Implemented child care licensing regulations on each tribal reservation

North Dakota's Challenges

Despite these efforts, education and training systems for early childhood care providers continue to face many critical challenges:

- The state's training requirements for licensed child care providers across all settings are not adequate to ensure that those working in the field have the necessary qualifications and skills to provide a high level of care
- Early childhood care providers and regulatory systems, as well as state policy makers, are not united in their understanding or support of the need for professional development opportunities to increase the knowledge and skill of the state's early childhood workforce
- Early childhood systems remain fragmented, with no standardized qualifications or mechanism for professional progression in place
- Training is not linked to college-level coursework, limiting a care provider's ability to receive college credit needed for professional advancement
- Career advising is unavailable to care providers not enrolled in a higher education institution
- No consistent system is in place to monitor the quality of early childhood training curricula or instruction, and to ensure that training is relevant to the needs of the early childhood community

Growing Futures Addresses the Challenges

To address these challenges, the North Dakota Department of Human Services, with funding from the Archibald Bush Foundation of St. Paul, MN, invited representatives from the early childhood community to participate in the North Dakota Early Childhood

Professional Development planning process with the objective of creating a seamless professional development system to enhance the professional preparation of the early childhood workforce and support the wellbeing of our state's children, families, and businesses.

The goal of Growing Futures is the quality care and education of all North Dakota's children – developing the future workforce while providing the infrastructure that allows today's parents to work and contribute to the state's economy.

The goal of *Growing Futures* is quality care and education for all of North Dakota's children – a goal that promotes the healthy development and success of the future workforce while at the same time providing the infrastructure necessary to support today's workforce.



Understanding Early Childhood Professional Development

What is early childhood professional development?

Professional development is the systematic, formal preparatory process through which early childhood care providers gain the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary to serve children and families. At the same time, a professional development system maps the careers options available in the field of early childhood and sets standards for achievement of career goals. Professional development in early childhood, as in any other career field, means cumulative progress toward a future goal through pre-determined steps.

For early childhood care providers, professional development offers the following advantages:

- **Learning and Growing:** A continuous learning process that has no end point; to learn and grow is a life-long commitment.
- **Knowledge and Skill:** Increasing knowledge and skill throughout the individual's professional career.
- **Recognition:** A way to be recognized for the knowledge and skill the individual brings to the job.
- **Choice:** A voluntary personal choice for self improvement and career advancement, not a mandate.
- **Opportunity:** Potentially increased earning power and expanded career options.

Who benefits from an early childhood professional development system?

The broad answer to this question is simply “everyone.” Every citizen benefits when children are raised to be competent, capable, productive, and responsible members of society, and when the state's economy is supported by a stable, well-trained workforce. A commitment to the field of early childhood is an investment in the future of our state.

Generally, the term “early childhood” is used to define the period of development from birth to age eight. A well-designed early childhood professional development system meets the needs of a broad range of audiences in the field of direct care and education: caregivers and teachers, directors, administrators, and those interested in pursuing a career in the early childhood industry. In North Dakota, many care providers will benefit from the implementation of a professional development system:

- State and tribal family and group child care providers
- State and tribal center child care administrators and staff
- State and tribal Head Start administrators and staff

Why is it important for North Dakota to implement an early childhood professional development system?

The most important reason to implement an early childhood professional development system in North Dakota is our children. Care providers who have a strong knowledge base and understand the needs of children provide higher quality care than those with less education and training (Kagan and Cohen, 1996). To improve the quality of care provided to the children of North Dakota, we must increase the quality of preparation provided to early childhood care providers. A professional development system ensures that the training and education available to the early childhood workforce is based on child development research and designed to help care providers continually refine the knowledge and skill they need to provide the best possible care to young children and their families.

Though the health and well-being of our children is the primary focus of an early childhood professional development system, a system also provides the field with some of the advantages enjoyed by other professionals. By standardizing the preparatory process necessary to be employed in various capacities in the early childhood field, a professional development system gives the field credibility. It makes clear to those in the field and those watching from outside that North Dakota's early childhood workforce is as professional as possible.

An early childhood professional development system gives individual care providers a way to document their professional progress in meaningful ways. It defines the qualifications necessary for employment in specific positions in the industry and gives programs a way to recruit and train staff, and to measure staff competence. It provides parents and other consumers with a tool to select programs on the basis of industry quality standards. A professional development system supports individual care providers, child care programs, and parents, and builds a critical infrastructure in our state.

What are the benefits of an early childhood professional development system?

In addition to offering our state's children and families the choice of early childhood care and education settings that provide higher quality care, the implementation of an early childhood professional development system will:

- Set standards for the preparation of the early childhood workforce to provide high quality care to North Dakota's children.
- Provide quality in the early childhood training and education available statewide and give direction to entities responsible for preparation of the workforce.
- Promote the articulation of training and education credits earned through one system of training and education to be accepted or applied at another.
- Provide support and career counseling to those who wish to pursue personal and professional development.
- Track professional progress for participants.
- Provide recognition and incentives for participants.
- Provide a vehicle to promote early childhood professional development and the importance of strengthening the early childhood field.



Components of an Early Childhood Professional Development System

Across the country, states are developing and implementing early childhood professional development systems. These systems typically include the following components, which are considered necessary to fully prepare a well qualified early childhood workforce:

- **Career categories:**
Career categories detail the training and education, work experience, and renewal requirements that best prepare individuals for careers in early childhood. The career categories guide individuals as they plan educational and career goals, and assist programs in selecting highly qualified staff.
- **A core body of knowledge for all early childhood practitioners:**
“Core knowledge” describes the specific research-based foundation of knowledge needed by early childhood care providers to work effectively with and for young children and their families – what adults who work with children need to *know* and *understand* to support children in reaching desired outcomes. The core body of knowledge is used to define the content of training curriculum and to evaluate understanding of the principles of early development and good practice, and to direct training and education institutions in planning programming to support this knowledge.
- **Core competencies for early childhood practitioners:**
Core competencies define the observable skills care providers must demonstrate to provide quality early care and education, and to support children’s learning and development – what adults who work with children must *be able to do* to support children in reaching desired outcomes. The core competencies are closely linked to North Dakota’s Early Learning Guidelines, which define the expected developmental outcomes for children birth to age six.
- **A training registry:**
A training registry is a central clearing house of information to track and verify qualifications for various roles in the field. A registry also recognizes professional achievement and attainment. The registry keeps records of an individual’s training and education, and issues transcripts that document an individual’s completed training.
- **Career advising:**
A career advising system is learner-centered and focused on the individual. Knowledgeable advisors are available to help individuals assess their professional strengths, recognize and set individual goals, encourage and empower individuals to achieve professional and personal goals, and to assist individuals in navigating the practical steps toward their goals. Career advising may include the development of individual training plans, information about options and opportunities, and help in accessing various systems such as higher education and scholarship funds.

- Curriculum approval process:**
 A curriculum approval process ensures that the materials used for workforce training are research-based and representative of best practices, and that training content clearly links practice to research and theory. A curriculum approval process reviews training materials to ensure that all training applied toward professional development is of good quality, and that it addresses core knowledge areas, is leveled for different skills and interests, and is appropriate to the many specializations in the field.
- Trainer Registry:**
 A trainer registry establishes a process by which trainers who deliver workforce training are qualified to provide the training recognized by the *Growing Futures* Professional Development system. It includes a database of qualified trainers, credentialing and credential renewal process, and a trainer recognition system. The trainer approval process establishes standards and qualifications for trainers and instructors to ensure they are knowledgeable of the most current research and theory in their subject area. Trainers must be able to represent their content area well to diverse groups of adult learners. The process also ensures that trainers meet the requirements of various training and education systems, such as those set nationally for CDA training or by higher education institutions to issue CEU credits.
- Training Clearinghouse:**
 The training information system is a clearinghouse for publicizing and promoting training and education opportunities approved for *Growing Futures* Professional Development, and for providing easy accessibility to training opportunities.
- Specialized credentials:**
 Specialized credentials support the qualifications for career categories by providing in-depth content knowledge in specialized areas, such as infant toddler care, special needs, and program administration. Specialized credentials are awarded based on training and assessment of demonstrated knowledge and skill in a particular focus area.
- Training articulation:**
 Training articulation establishes links among training systems such as community-based training organizations, higher education institutions, Head Start, and so on. Training articulation supports care providers in their ongoing personal and professional growth by providing specific training that builds towards more advanced levels of preparation.
- Incentives and scholarships:**
 An important goal of a professional development system is to demonstrate the clear and progressive professional pathways and to encourage and reward professional development through recognition, incentives, and scholarships.



Key Assumptions of North Dakota's Early Childhood Professional Development Plan

North Dakota's Early Childhood Professional Development Plan is based on several key assumptions, which govern our understanding of the needs of children and families, and of the responsibility and public trust placed on the field of early childhood to meet these needs. Key assumptions include:

KEY ASSUMPTION #1: The factors that result in healthy child growth and development are the same across all early childhood settings.

Care providers in all settings---licensed family child care, center-based care, Head Start, and public schools, rural and urban, large and small---must be grounded in the same core knowledge and demonstrate the same fundamental skills and attributes that lead to positive child outcomes. An understanding of the core knowledge and principles that define the field of early childhood is essential to direct care providers as well as to those in administrative, support, education, and specialized roles. (Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Bredekamp & Rosegrant, 1992; NAEYC, 1994)

KEY ASSUMPTION #2: Children are developing, growing, and learning at all times, in all settings.

Children's growth, development, and learning are not limited to certain times of the day or to certain locations. Children do not suddenly begin to learn when they enter public school. In fact, children are learning at all times. Every experience, interaction, and relationship teaches the child something about the world and their ability to function in it. The question we must ask is not where children learn but rather *what* children learn across all settings. As an early childhood community and as a state, we want to ensure that all of our children are cared for in environments that foster successful development and learning, and that lead to positive outcomes for every child. These environments are not "optimum" or "desirable;" rather they are the necessary conditions for healthy human growth and development. (Bowman & Stott, 1994; Bredekamp & Copple, 1997; Ramey & Ramey, 2005; Shore, 1997)

KEY ASSUMPTION #3: The training and education of care providers is the number one indicator of child care quality.

Credible, meaningful, rigorous, and ongoing training and education of care providers is the key to better environments for our children. No one ever knows all there is to know about child development and good practice, and new information is continually emerging. Individuals who care for our children and/or work in the field of early childhood should possess the knowledge and skills needed to provide our children with safe, healthy learning environments. Training and education are ongoing processes for all care providers in the early childhood field. (Bredekamp, 1989; Howes, C., M. Whitebook, & D. Phillips, 1992; Hyson, M., 2003;

KEY ASSUMPTION #4: Experience, based on developmentally appropriate practices, is the key to better environments for our children.

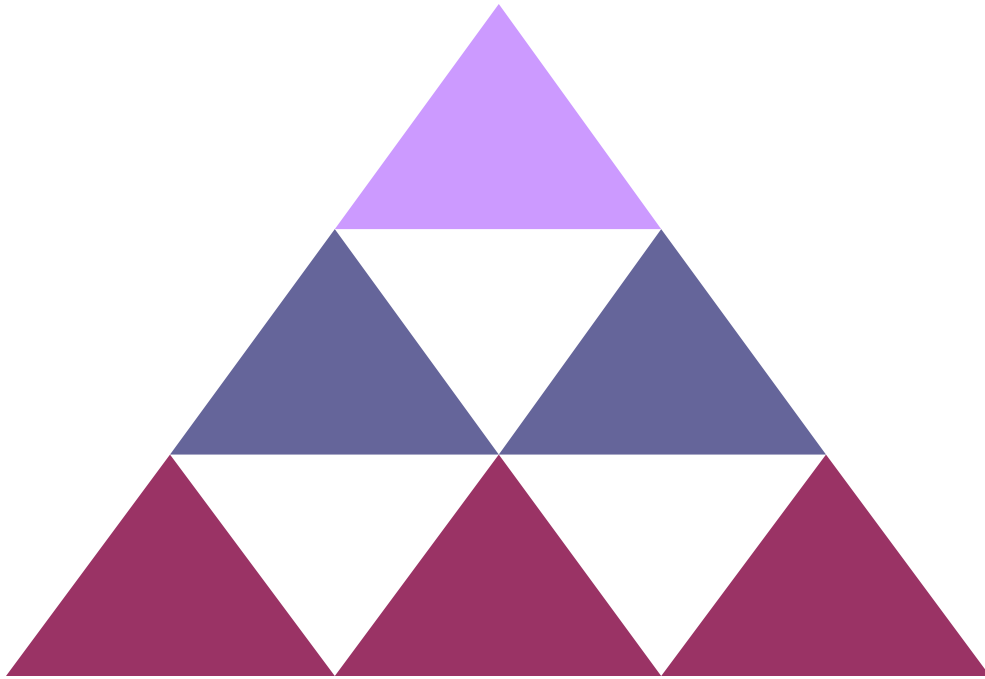
Research clearly shows that longevity alone is not an indicator of quality early care. In fact, research suggests that the longer an individual provides care with proper training in good practice, the more firmly entrenched they become in appropriate practices (Bredekamp, & Copple, 1997; Dunn, L. 1993; Galinsky et al, 1994; Kagan and Newton, 1989; Kontos, 1994; Kontos and Fiene, 1987; Phillipsen, Burchinal, Howes, & Cryer, 1997; Ruopp, Travers, Glantz & Coelen, 1979; Whitebrook et al 1990).

KEY ASSUMPTION #5: Specific careers require specific knowledge and skill.

To qualify for most professional positions, specific skills and knowledge are required. For example, to be an instructor at a college requires an advanced degree and other specific skills. To be center director requires knowledge of child development as well as knowledge of financial management, personnel, labor laws, and other knowledge unique to the position. North Dakota's *Early Growing Futures* Professional Development Plan details the education, skills, and knowledge that specific careers in the field of early childhood require and sets a standard for career positions. (DeBord & Sawyers, 1996; Howes, Whitebook, & Phillips, 1992; Howes, 1997; Hyson, M., 2003; Kontos, Howes, & Galinsky, 1997)

KEY ASSUMPTION #6: Professional development is an investment with solid returns.

Clearly, the training and education of early childhood care providers results in positive returns for the children in care and gives families using child care more quality choices. Just as clearly, training and education result in positive returns for early childhood care providers; when a person invests in them self, they expand their options and opportunities and come to see themselves in new and exciting ways. Finally, professional development is an investment for our state--a better trained workforce results in solid economic returns and adds to the quality of life available in North Dakota. (Barnett & Hustedt, 2003; Brace, 2003; Fassinger, Jenson, and Rathge, 2004; Peisner-Feinberg et al, 2000; Weaver, 2002; Whitebook, et. al., 1990)



Growing Futures

Professional Development System



Growing Futures Professional Development System

Growing Futures Professional Development is a voluntary system for individuals who provide direct care and education for young children in state and tribally licensed child care, and Head Start settings, and who are focused on intentional professional growth and demonstrating their commitment to quality care and education. Participation requires membership, and individuals and programs are welcome to join at any time. Membership requires a one-time application fee that entitles members to access the plan's many benefits and incentives. Benefits and incentives include participation in the training registry, enhanced information about training and educational opportunities, career advising, recognition and rewards, and financial incentives and scholarships.

Growing Futures Professional Development is focused on three specific aspects of the early childhood profession – direct care career **positions**, individual **care providers**, and early childhood **programs** that provide care and education to North Dakota's children.

1. Direct Care Career Development

Direct Care Career Development defines the direct care **career positions** most common to the early care and education industry. For each career position, the qualifications shown to lead to positive outcomes for children are outlined, and entry level qualifications are recommended for employment in the position. Employers are encouraged to reference the grid to develop job descriptions and qualifications; individuals are encouraged to use the grid as a tool to set educational and career goals. The Direct Care Career Development section also includes a chart of the various pathways available for enhanced career preparation and descriptions of specialized training and certificates that support an individual's professional growth.

2. Professional Recognition

Professional Recognition is a voluntary system for documenting, recognizing, and rewarding commitment to the early childhood profession by **individual care providers**. Professional recognition is available to any member who provides direct care and education for young children in state and tribally licensed child care, and Head Start settings. Participants earn points based on experience, education, and training, as well as membership in professional organizations. These points are linked to rewards such as financial incentives, reduced fee payments for approved training and professional conferences, scholarships, and other professional support resources.

3. Quality Rating System

A third aspect of the *Growing Futures* Early Childhood Professional Development System involves **program** assessment based on accepted standards of good practice in the early childhood industry. Though a Quality Rating System has not been designed at the time of this publication, such a system is central to goal of professional development and is an anticipated addition to the system.

The following pages detail two aspects of the North Dakota *Growing Futures* Professional Development plan: **Direct Care Career Categories** and **Professional Recognition**.



Growing Futures Career Qualifications

Direct Care Career Positions and Qualifications		
Career Categories	Entry Qualifications	
	Education/Training	Experience
Family Child Care Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School or GED • Core Knowledge Certificate • Family /Group Certificate: Part I* 	
Group Child Care Provider	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School or GED • Core Knowledge Certificate • Family/Group Certificate: Part I • Family/Group Certificate: Part II* 	2 years as a licensed direct care provider
Program Director	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year degree in EC / CD • Program Director Certificate: Part I • Program Director Certificate: Part II* 	3 years direct care experience
Assistant Director / Supervising Teacher / Head Start Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4-year degree in EC / CD or Head Start required field • Program Director Certificate: Part I* 	2 years direct care experience or in Head Start required field
Lead Teacher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2-year degree in EC / CD • Classroom Educator Certificate: Part I • Classroom Educator Certificate: Part II* • Infant Toddler Certificate (if working in an infant-toddler program)* 	2 years direct care experience
Teacher Assistant	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CDA / Apprenticeship • Classroom Educator Certificate: Part I* 	
Program Aide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • High School degree or GED • Core Knowledge Certificate 	

*To be completed within the first year of employment in the position. **NOTE: It is assumed that licensing requirements are met in each career category in addition to the education and experience listed above.**

Core Knowledge Certificate

45-hour standardized course to establish common knowledge base



Growing Futures
Career Pathways

High School Degree

Career Options

- Family Child Care
- Group Child Care
- Program Aide

Advanced Levels of Preparation

- Family Group Certificate I
- Family Group Certificate II

Certificates and Specializations:

- Family Group I and II
- Level I Certificates

CDA / Apprenticeship

Career Options

- Teacher Assistant

Advanced Levels of Preparation

- Classroom Educator I

Certificates and Specializations:

- Classroom Education I
- Level I and II Certificates

Associate Degree

Career Options

- Lead Teacher

Advanced Levels of Preparation

- Classroom Educator II

Certificates and Specializations:

- Classroom Educator II
- Level I, II, and III Certificates

Bachelors Degree

Career Options

- Assistant Director / Supervising Teacher / Head Start Manager
- Program Director

Advanced Levels of Preparation

- Program Director Credential I
- Program Director Credential II

Certificates and Specializations:

- ND Early Childhood Teacher Licensure (DPI)
- Level I, II, III, and IV Certificates



Growing Futures Certificates and Specializations

Professional development occurs as individual care providers grow in knowledge and skill. Certificates and specializations allow individuals to focus on specific content areas and deepen their knowledge, understanding, and application of early childhood topics.

Core Knowledge Certificate			
Certificate	Training Hours	Prerequisite	Description
North Dakota Child Care Core Knowledge	45 hours	No prerequisite Strongly recommended for continuing employment or licensure in all child care settings. Required for participation in <i>Growing Futures</i> , within the first year of membership.	A standardized 45-hour course designed to establish a common base of core knowledge, to include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • North Dakota Licensing Rules and Regulations • North Dakota Professional Standards: Early Learning Guidelines, Core Knowledge, Core Competencies, Environmental Rating Scales and Quality Rating System • Health and Safety in Child Care Settings: Sanitation, practices that promote health and prevent injury, SIDS/Shaken Baby, transportation safety, emergency preparedness • Developmentally Appropriate Practices • Environments • Establishing Relationships

Certificates and Specializations: Level I				
Certificate	Requirements	Prerequisite	Experience	Renewal
Family Group Certificate: Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-hour standardized course • On-site competency assessment 	High School degree or GED	None	Core Knowledge training, Family/Group Certificates I and II, and one additional <i>Growing Futures</i> certificate fully meet the education requirements for the national CDA Credential. For CDA, all applicable coursework must be taken within a 5-year period and other CDA requirements must be completed. Renewal follows the national CDA renewal requirements.
Family Group Certificate: Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30-hour standardized course • On-site competency assessment 	High School degree or GED Completion of Family Group Certificate: Part I	1 year as licensed direct care provider	
Infant Toddler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 hours within a 2-year period • Portfolio 	High School degree or GED	Currently working with infants and/or toddlers	Full recertification required every four years
School-Aged	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 hours within a 2-year period • Portfolio 	High School degree or GED	Currently working with school-aged children	Full recertification required every four years
Inclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30 hours within a 2-year period • Portfolio 	High School degree or GED	None	Full recertification required every four years

Curriculum Specializations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hours within a 2-year period (each specialization) Portfolio 	High School degree or GED	None	20 hours of early childhood training annually
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Certificates and Specializations: Level II				
Certificate	Requirements	Prerequisite	Experience	Renewal
Classroom Educator: Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-hour standardized course On-site competency assessment 	Current CDA or CCDS Apprenticeship	None	20 hours in early childhood annually or 1 semester credit course in early childhood or child development
Family Child Care Quality Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hours within a 2-year period Portfolio 	Current CDA or CCDS Apprenticeship	2 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood education and programming, or child development annually
Center Child Care Quality Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hours within a 2-year period Portfolio 	Current CDA or CCDS Apprenticeship	2 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood education and programming, or child development annually

Certificates and Specializations: Level III				
Certificate	Requirements	Prerequisite	Experience	Renewal
Classroom Educator: Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-hour standardized course On-site competency assessment 	2-year degree in Early Childhood or Child Development	2 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood annually or 1 semester credit course in early childhood or child development
Mentor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-hour standardized course On-site competency assessment Portfolio 	2-year degree in Early Childhood or Child Development	3 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood annually or 2 semester credit course in early childhood or child development

Certificates and Specializations: Level IV				
Certificate	Requirements	Prerequisite	Experience	Renewal
Program Director: Part I	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-hour standardized course On-site competency assessment 	4-year degree in Early Childhood or Child Development	2 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood annually or 2 semester credit course in early childhood or child development
Program Director: Part II	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30-hour standardized course On-site competency assessment 	4-year degree in Early Childhood or Child Development	3 years direct care experience	20 hours in early childhood annually or 2 semester credit course in early childhood or child development
Trainer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 30 hour standardized course On-site competency assessment On-going evaluation 	4-year degree in Early Childhood or Child Development, or specialization	3 years direct care experience Public speaking	20 hours in early childhood annually, to include 10 hours of adult learning or trainer skill development



Growing Futures Professional Recognition

Professional Recognition							
Experience*	Pts	Education**	Pts	Training***	Pts	Bonus:	Pts
- 1 year		Completed <i>Growing Futures</i> credential / certificate	5	Minimum requirements		Current membership in an early childhood professional association	1
1 – 5 years	1 -5	Current CDA or DOL Apprenticeship	15	Average of 20 hours per year for the previous two years (minimum of 40 hrs in two years)	20	Committee or officer position in early childhood professional association in the past two years	3
6 – 10 years	6-10	2-year EC / CD degree	20	Average of 30 hours per year for the past two years (minimum of 60 hrs in two years)	30		
11 – 20+ years	11-20	4-year EC / CD degree	30	Average of 40 hours or more per year for the past two years (minimum of 80 hrs in two years)	40		
		Graduate EC / CD degree	40				
____ Experience + ____ Education + ____ Training + ____ Bonus = ____ TOTAL POINTS							
Recognition Designations							
SILVER						20 – 39 Points	
SAPPHIRE						40 – 59 Points	
AMETHYST						60 – 79 Points	
RUBY						80-100 Points	

***Experience** is defined as employment in licensed or approved child care programs for a minimum of 20 hours per week. Documentation of licensed status or hours of employment are required. One point is awarded for each year of experience.

****Education** is defined as completed coursework resulting in an early childhood or child development credential, certificate, or degree. Documentation required.

*****Training** is defined as classes, workshops, or conferences taken for credit or non-credit, and approved by the *Growing Futures* Curriculum Approval Board. Documentation required.

Professional Recognition Incentives

Individuals may apply every two years for Professional Recognition. Current documentation is required to access incentives and bonuses. To access financial benefits and incentives, members are responsible to submit documentation of experience, education, and training used to determine recognition levels. Members must resubmit updated documentation every two years.

TOTAL POINTS	DESIGNATION	CASH BONUS	PROFESSIONAL BONUS
			Reduced fee payment for approved training and professional conferences, and on purchases from the <i>Growing Futures</i> Membership Store
20 – 39 Points	Silver	\$25.00 (50.00)	5%
40 – 59 Points	Sapphire	\$50.00 (100.00)	10%
60 – 79 Points	Amethyst	\$100.00 (250.00)	15%
80 – 100 Points	Ruby	\$200.00 (500.00)	20%

To document professional recognition categories, individuals will receive a color-coded recognition card, valid for a two-year period. The card number will entitle the holder to the professional bonuses listed above.

NOTE: Cash bonuses and incentives are proposed amounts only. Actual amounts are dependent on availability of funding.



Additional Careers in Early Care and Education

In addition to careers in direct care settings such as family child care, child care centers, and Head Start, early childhood practitioners work in a variety of programs and settings across North Dakota. Some typical settings, programs, and roles are listed below. Each position has specific career preparatory requirements and most require a minimum of a four-year degree.

Child Care Resource and Referral

Referral Counselor, Training Coordination, Child Care Specialists, Health Consultants,

County Extension Services

Extension Agent, Parent Resource Center

Department of Human Services

Child Care Licensing Representative, Program Coordinator, Policy Specialist, Licensing Administrator

Early Childhood Higher Education

Professor, Adjunct Professor, Instructor

Early Childhood Special Education

Teacher, Assistant Teacher, Parent Educator, Principal, Director

Early Intervention

Developmental Specialist, Speech Therapist, Physical Therapist, Occupational Therapist, Infant Mental Health Specialist, Family Therapist

Hospitals and Health Services

Child Life Specialist, Pediatric Nurse, Maternal and Child Health Specialist, Child Psychologist

In-Home Care

Nanny, Au Pair

Public Schools

Pre-school Teacher, Kindergarten Teacher, Paraprofessional



Glossary of Terms

Articulation: Agreements or links between training and education systems that allow credits taken from one system to be transferred to and applied at another system

Apprentice: An individual registered with the federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training to complete the two-year apprenticeship training program as described in the state Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship: The two-year period of education and on-the-job training that registered apprentices complete, as described in the state Apprenticeship Standards

Apprenticeship Sponsor Site: A child care program that has agreed to abide by the state Apprenticeship Standards to train and mentor apprentices, and which has registered with the federal Bureau of Apprenticeship and Training

Archibald Bush Foundation: A grant funding organization with interests in areas related to child development and the training of early care and education practitioners

Career Advising: A formal system in which knowledgeable advisors help practitioners recognize and set individual professional goals and access systems to meet those goals

Child Care Development Specialist (CCDS): The federal Department of Labor credential earned by individuals who successfully complete a registered apprenticeship program

CCR&R: Child Care Resource and Referral. Part of a national network of CCR&R agencies designed to help families, child care providers, and communities find, provide, and plan for affordable, quality child care.

CDA: Child Development Associate. A nationally recognized early childhood professional credential awarded to individuals who successfully complete the nationally established requirements of the CDA program to work with children ages birth to five years

CDA Advisor: An individual who meets the nationally established qualifications to serve as an advisor to CDA candidates

CDA Functional Area: The domains of child development and early childhood programming that define the CDA approach to training and skills building

Code of Ethics: The agreed upon standards for professional behavior and decision making that direct the work of practitioners in the field, and codified by the National Association for the Education of Young Children

CEUs: Continuing Education Units, typically issued by higher education institutions. They may be obtained at conferences of professional education organizations and may be applied to renewal of professional credentials such as the CDA or may be required for renewal of various certificates and licensures

Core Body of Knowledge: The research-based knowledge that informs the field of early childhood and child development and directs the core, or essential, knowledge that early childhood care providers should learn and apply

Core Curriculum: The foundational knowledge base for the early childhood profession.

Credential: A professional award given for successful completion of pre-determined requirements and qualifications

Early Childhood: The period of life from birth to age eight

Environmental Rating Scale: The nationally recognized set of observation tools used to assess the quality of early childhood and school age care environments

Developmentally Appropriate Practice: Research-based effective and respectful caregiving and teaching practices that lead to positive outcomes for children.

Fieldwork: A supervised or mentored caregiving or teaching experience in the field, working with young children and their families

Head Start: A federally funded early childhood and family support program

Licensing Rules and Regulations: The laws established by the ND state legislature that govern the direct care of young children in formal and informal child care settings and administered through the ND Department of Human Services

Licensed Family Child Care Provider: An individual licensed by the state to provide care for up to 7 children including their own in the individual's home

Licensed Group Child Care Provider: A program licensed by the state to care for 8-18 children including their own. May require a second caregiver

Natural Allies: A grant funded project designed to build collaboration between early childhood systems to support children with disabilities and their families

NDAEYC: North Dakota Association for the Education of Young Children. The state affiliate of the national early childhood professional organization called the Association for the Education of Young Children

NDCCPI: North Dakota Child Care Providers Incorporated

NDDHS: North Dakota Department of Human Services

ND Head Start Collaboration Office: The state Head Start office designed to create a visible presence at the state level to assist in the development of the significant, multi-agency and public-private partnerships between Head Start and the state.

Para-professional: An individual who assists in working with children and families under the direction of a qualified teacher or other professional

Portfolio: A collection of work that demonstrates knowledge of a particular area and/or growth and development over time

Registry: A system to track and document professional development, including education and other professional accomplishments. A registry might also be used to track and advertise available training and education opportunities

Stake holder: Individuals or organizations that have a vested interest in a particular subject or project

Trainer, Level 1- 4: Refers to the system of professional development for early childhood trainers that links trainer education, experience and other demonstrated skills to training delivery

WestEd and PITC: The standardized training curriculum for caregivers of infants and toddlers, developed by the Program for Infant Toddler Caregiver (PITC), and delivered in North Dakota as a state training initiative



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ADDENDUM

History of Professional Development Planning in North Dakota

For a number of years, the need for a early childhood professional development system has been recognized by early childhood practitioners and entities in North Dakota. This section briefly chronicles the professional development efforts that have taken place in our state over the past decade.

1992 The Visioning Plan

The early childhood community develops a five-year plan for early childhood in North Dakota. Plan developers identify professional development as a key issue to be addressed and call for the following action:

- Develop and implement an Early Childhood Development Plan to establish that early childhood professional standards, preparation and compensation will be on a par with other similar professions.
- Encourage the development of certification and endorsements/credentials for early childhood educators teaching children, birth through age eight. The endorsements will be for teachers of children ages 0-3, 3-5, and 5-8, and credentials will be for teachers of children in early childhood special education ages 0-3 and 3-8.
- Ensure that all training opportunities in North Dakota will be available to early childhood care providers.

1993 The Bush Foundations funds the Infant-Toddler Training Project

The North Dakota Department of Human Services receives funding from the Bush Foundation to establish an infant-toddler child care provider training delivery system throughout the state inclusive of the four tribal reservations.

1995 The North Dakota Associations for the Education of Young Children (NDAEYC) creates a professional development plan for early childhood professionals

1996 The North Dakota Child Care Providers Incorporated (NDCCPI) creates a professional development plan for family child care providers

1997 Training requirements for licensed child care providers are increased

1999 Child Care Resource and Referral (CCR&R) develops a professional development plan for all early childhood practitioners, begins to level core curriculum to identify training gaps, implements trainer qualification criteria, and establishes the CCR&R Training Approval Board

2000 Head Start mandates that 50% of teaching staff hold Associate degrees by 2003

Growing Futures: the early childhood community develops a five-year plan for early childhood in North Dakota

In 2000, representatives from North Dakota's early childhood community assembled to define a new plan to move early childhood services forward in the coming five-years. The planning process, funded by the North Dakota Head

Start Collaborative Office, identified “improving the status of child care professional” as a major goal and formulated action steps to address the issue, including:

- Review, revise, and implement career development plans for early care and education professionals
- Formulate a career development plan for early childhood licensors
- Coordinate and share available training opportunities
- Develop an articulation plan to address the continuity of higher education in the early childhood field
- Develop comprehensive trainings that address specialized issues and needs
- Strengthen and expand delivery systems that enable optimum accessibility to quality early childhood training and education
- Develop a comprehensive system of financial support for early childhood professional development

The first Professional Development stake holder’s meeting held

To begin the work identified in the ***Growing Futures*** planning document, the Head Start Collaboration Office funded a professional development “kick-off” meeting designed to be highly participatory. The stake holders, representing the early childhood community from across the state, developed a vision for early childhood professional development in North Dakota and identified core values, including:

- Early childhood programs will provide quality care and education through well-prepared professionals grounded in principles of child development
- There will be a clearly defined early childhood care and education system that coordinates, links, and tracks the opportunities for training and education of early childhood professionals
- There will be multiple pathways for acquiring the qualifications necessary for early childhood professional (CDA, Associate degrees, Bachelors degrees, and advanced degrees)
- There will be articulation agreements between and among Child Care Resource and Referral, tribal colleges, and the state’s higher education system including private colleges and universities
- There will be monetary incentives for early childhood care and education care providers who continue training in early childhood and scholarships for those who continue their training and education
- There will be an accessible statewide system that tracks all approved early childhood training offered throughout the state
- Guidelines regarding positive work conditions for early childhood professionals will be developed and promoted

2002 The Bush Foundation funds professional development planning efforts

The North Dakota Early Childhood Professional Development Project is created to formulate a comprehensive professional development plan for the field of early childhood in North Dakota. The North Dakota Professional Development Leadership Team serves as a steering committee for the effort.

The second Professional Development stake holder's meeting is held, gathering stake holders from throughout the state to provide an update on the progress of the Early Childhood Professional Development Project.

The U.S. Department of Labor awards North Dakota Department of Human Services the Child Care Development Specialist Apprenticeship Grant to establish and early childhood apprenticeship project in the state.

Natural Allies is created to prepare professional to work with children with disabilities in natural settings.

- 2003 The North Dakota Early Childhood Professional Development Project releases a draft early childhood professional development plan and request input from the broader early childhood community. Focus groups were held across the state.**

The stake holders met to review the draft professional development plan based on the focus group data. A revision writing team was established to revise the plan to better reflect the input from gathered from the focus groups and stake holders.

An grant request for the implementation of the early childhood professional development plan was submitted to the Bush Foundation and was not funded.

- 2004 The writing team met throughout the year to attempt to rework the professional development plan, under the direction of the Professional Development Task Force Steering Committee.**

- 2005 Dan Haggard, Director of New Mexico's Department of Child Development, met with stake holders to consult on North Dakota's professional development plan.**

The writing team presented the first draft of the professional development plan to the Steering Committee in October.

- 2006 A revised draft of the professional development was presented to the Steering Committee in January.**